

REMARKS

The Official Action of May 20, 2004, paper No. 5, solely in the nature of a requirement for restriction, has been carefully reviewed. The claims in the application are now non-elected claims 1-66 and elected claims 67-69, 76-81, and 88-90.

Applicants have claimed domestic priority from their provisional application 60/264,519, filed January 25, 2001. Acknowledgement thereof by the PTO would be appreciated.

Restriction has been required between what the PTO deems to be three (3) patentably distinct inventions as outlined at the top of page 2 of the Official Action. As applicants must make an election even though they traverse the requirement, applicants hereby respectfully and provisionally elect Group III, presently claims 67-69, 76-81, and 88-90, with traverse and without prejudice.

Applicants respectfully traverse the requirement on the basis that the "groups" or inventions are sufficiently related so that, even though they are separately classified, the search and examination of all three together can be carried out without serious burden. In this regard, applicants respectfully rely on the second

paragraph of MPEP 803 which **requires** search and examination of an entire application, even though the requirement is 100% correct, if it would not constitute a serious burden to do so.

Applicants believe that a complete and thorough search of elected Group III would also require a thorough and complete search of non-elected Groups I and II as well. As such a search must in any event be conducted, applicants submit that it really makes no sense to require restriction, and consequently all three groups should be examined in the present application.

Moreover, the elected "system" claims are in effect linking claims joining Groups I and II. All three Groups are therefore linked, and the requirement should be withdrawn on this basis also.

Withdrawal of the requirement and examination on the merits of all the claims are respectfully requested.

Certain amendments have been made above. These are not substantial amendments relating to patentability, but are instead amendments of a formal nature only, i.e. made to place the claims in improved form for U.S. practice. The amendments are not "narrowing" amendments, because the scope of the claims has not been reduced. No limitations have been added and none are intended.

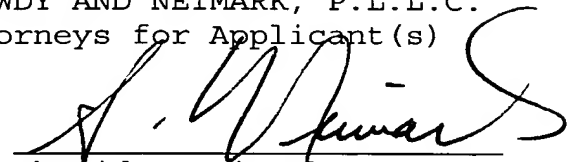
Appln. No. 09/929,260
Amd. dated July 20, 2004
Reply to Office Action of May 20, 2004

Applicants respectfully await the results of a first
examination on the merits.

Respectfully submitted,

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